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AUTHOR Kirby, Emily B.
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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the development of a system for assessing transfer program outcomes (TPO), using the effort at Oakton Community College (OCC) as an example. While originally designed to provide timely information on senior institutions as experienced by transfer students, TPO appeared to do considerably more. System highlights included more accurate advising of potential transfers and generation of more accurate data for college planning, accountability, and monitoring of community college transfer students in public senior institutions. The report details the pilot study of OCC and development of the survey instrument. It proceeds to cover the promotion of TPO at both the community college and the senior institution. Specific outcomes relative to feedback from transfer students to both institutions, data base building, methods of analysis, and dissemination strategy as well as other benefits such as the usefulness of data for reporting requirements to federal and state agencies, the strengthening of institutional affiliations, and the ability to pinpoint potential problems are reviewed. Possible obstacles in TPO data collection are identified and include timing and lack of senior institution cooperation. Suggestions for procedural improvements are made. (TR)

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An Assessment of Transfer Program Outcomes

Emily B. Kirby
Oakton Community College

American Educational Research Association

Special Interest Group
for
Community/Junior College Research

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Assessment of Transfer Program Outcomes

I. Introduction

Although community colleges invariably have catalogues from senior institutions, need for additional information remains. There is a need to assess the specific kind of impact on a specific kind of student: the impact of the community college on its transfer students. Meeting this need involves gathering timely information about state senior institutions to provide accurate answers to students before they transfer. Likewise, after they transfer to senior institutions, the community college wants to follow students' progress and monitor its own. Finally, there is a need for an accuracy measure of information the community college gives to prospective transfer students. Concern here is with assessing the institutional impact of transfer programs at one community college: Oakton Community College (OCC). This paper describes the system, Transfer Program Outcomes (TPO), currently in operation at OCC devised to tackle these issues. TPO lends itself to generalization.

II. Background

Assessment of transfer program outcomes is of significant concern to community college research. Awarding of credit (transfer articulation) by senior institutions for work done at community colleges has frequently been studied (see, for instance, Willingham, 1972; Kintzer 1975, 1976; Rinehart, 1977) and can be assessed by TPO. Kintzer (1976) suggests, among policy and procedural issues requiring attention if needs of these students are to be met, information about the total new environment and improvements in inter-institutional cooperation (pages 40-1). Vaughn and others, (1976, page 11) in their discussion of consumerism and its effect upon community colleges emphasize accountability concerns and the need to demonstrate that adequate information is furnished for decision making purposes. While Baird (1974) bemoans lack of college environment measures which have practical utility. Approaches should be devised which are specific, organized to elicit informed opinion, produce results which are easy to communicate, according to Baird. He continues, "This implies that instruments should be developed that include the expert opinion of students about matters affecting them..." (page 309). Nor is Baird alone in advocating inter-institutional comparisons, which are obviously necessary however fraught with problems. TPO has kept these and other suggestions in mind. In further

Grateful acknowledgement of help with this paper is made to Alfred R. Hecht and John C. McConnell. All faults in this paper are the author's.

pursuit of the literature, an ERIC search yielded little of substantive or methodological utility for TPO in "Junior College, Transfer Student","2 and 4 Year Institutions," which actively solicited comparisons of junior and senior institutions by students who had experienced both. Perhaps the descriptors were incorrect. TPO is indebted to Alfred's (1977) model for measuring outcomes: the model had great heuristic value. Assessment here, however, must be partial focusing upon the Student Outcomes output factor.

The OCC background is also part of TPO. Student Development Faculty (SDF), counselors, are each assigned a senior institution and have a contact person there; one SDF member coordinates transfer articulation with the various senior institutions. Annual transfer articulation conferences are held at most resident state senior institutions. When possible, it is customary to inform the former OCC students that an OCC SDF person will be on campus and available for discussion during the conference.

Prior to TPO, information gathered from transfer students and from conference sessions involving both senior institution and community college representatives furnished data used for advising potential transfers. Senior institutions periodically furnished OCC with aggregate data about former students; data were general, tending to vary in accuracy and times of the year when information was received. Thus, in addition to college catalogues scant information existed to assist students in making their best senior institution choice. One could add, Nickens (1972) notwithstanding, that the goal is to keep students at a transfer institution, and that models which only predict academic performance may fall short of the requisites. Community colleges are holistic, dedicated to the education of the entire student, not to the specialized aspects of students. TPO was developed in this spirit to measure a variety of transfer outcomes.

III. Development of the Transfer Program Outcomes System

I. Desired Outcomes

TPO was designed to improve assessment of transfer outcomes. Outcomes sought included providing information to students for decision making, to the community college for planning, accountability and advising benefits, and increasing inter-institutional cooperation between OCC and state senior institutions. The chart below lists some of the desired outcomes:

Objectives of TPO

The objectives of the TPO system included:

1. development of an effective, rapid feedback method for follow-up of OCC transfer students at senior institutions,

2. development of a dissemination strategy for results,

3. development of tools for assuring collection, analysis, transmission of accurate contemporary information about transfer to the senior institution,

4. increasing accuracy of prediction of success of transfer students at senior institutions.

Chart 1

2. The Pilot

The Director of Instructional Research and Evaluation (DIRE) at OCC was asked to attend a transfer articulation conference as orientation to follow-up of former students now enrolled at senior institutions.

A check of background information available at OCC revealed that SDF members had sometimes asked transfers to respond to a survey about their experiences at the senior institution. Few students returned such surveys; results were never tabulated. The OCC SDF member for the senior institution hosting the conference had prepared such a survey instrument plus a cover letter. The SDF member had a list of currently enrolled former OCC students.

The survey was not considered adequate. Assistance was requested in revising the survey and updating the cover letter. At this session a prime objective stated was to elicit information about courses which did not articulate, and to determine what students understood to be the reasons for denial of credit.

A revised survey and a new, personal cover letter were produced by IRE. The letter was enthusiastically endorsed and the new survey instrument was approved. Copies of each were sent to each former OCC student at the senior institution approximately a week prior to the transfer articulation conference. (See Appendix A for sample documents.)

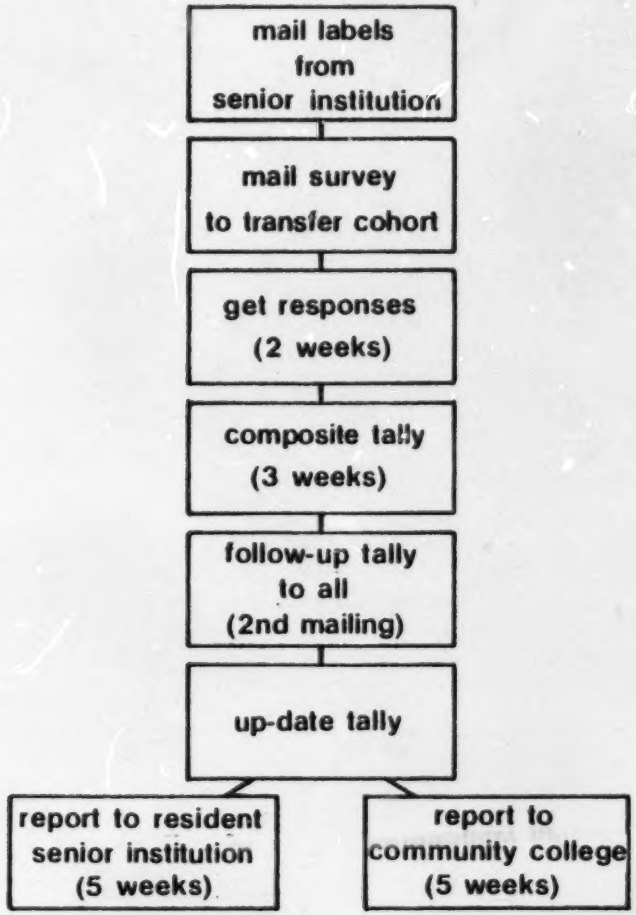
Recipients either mailed their surveys back to OCC or brought them along when they met with us at their senior institution. Student reactions to the instrument and letter were highly favorable.

Survey results were tabulated and a preliminary tally was prepared. This was mailed to all OCC transfers with a cover letter encouraging non-respondents to provide their input. While self-addressed mailing envelopes were provided, no new copies of the survey were furnished. Several students sent back their surveys in response to this mailing, increasing our response rate.

A report detailing the findings was prepared. Chart 2, Cohort Evaluation Steps,

CHART 2

Cohort Evaluation Steps For Resident Senior Institution


mail labels from senior institution
mail survey to transfer cohort
get responses (2 weeks)
composite tally (3 weeks)
follow-up tally to all (2nd mailing)
up-date tally
report to resident senior institution (5 weeks)
report to community college (5 weeks)

illustrates this process for a single cohort.

3. The Instrument--as an example

The instrument prepared was one page long. It was designed to elicit demographic information, comparison of selected institutional characteristics, comparison of student perceptions, and transfer articulation information. Items of a demographic nature included sex, semesters and class status at 'This School', age, semesters at OCC, number of credits earned at OCC, number of credits transferred to 'This School' from OCC, major at 'This School', number of credits you are taking this semester. The items on student perceptions involved before and after transfer responses on cost, number of semesters to graduation, recreational possibilities, academic standards. Such items compared expected and actual events. There were comparisons of OCC and 'This School' on another list of pertinent variables such as accessibility of faculty. Such ratings were made on a five-point scale (1 = lowest). A large portion of the survey space was for identification of courses which did not articulate along with the reasons for the problems. Finally, space was left for student ventilation and comments both positive and negative.

We do not claim originality for this instrument. However, we have not found one quite like it in our searches. Other institutions obviously have developed instruments inviting students to compare their pre- and post-transfer perceptions, and their community college and senior institution experiences. The last lines of the OCC instrument thank the student for giving time and assistance. (A sample instrument is in Appendix A.)

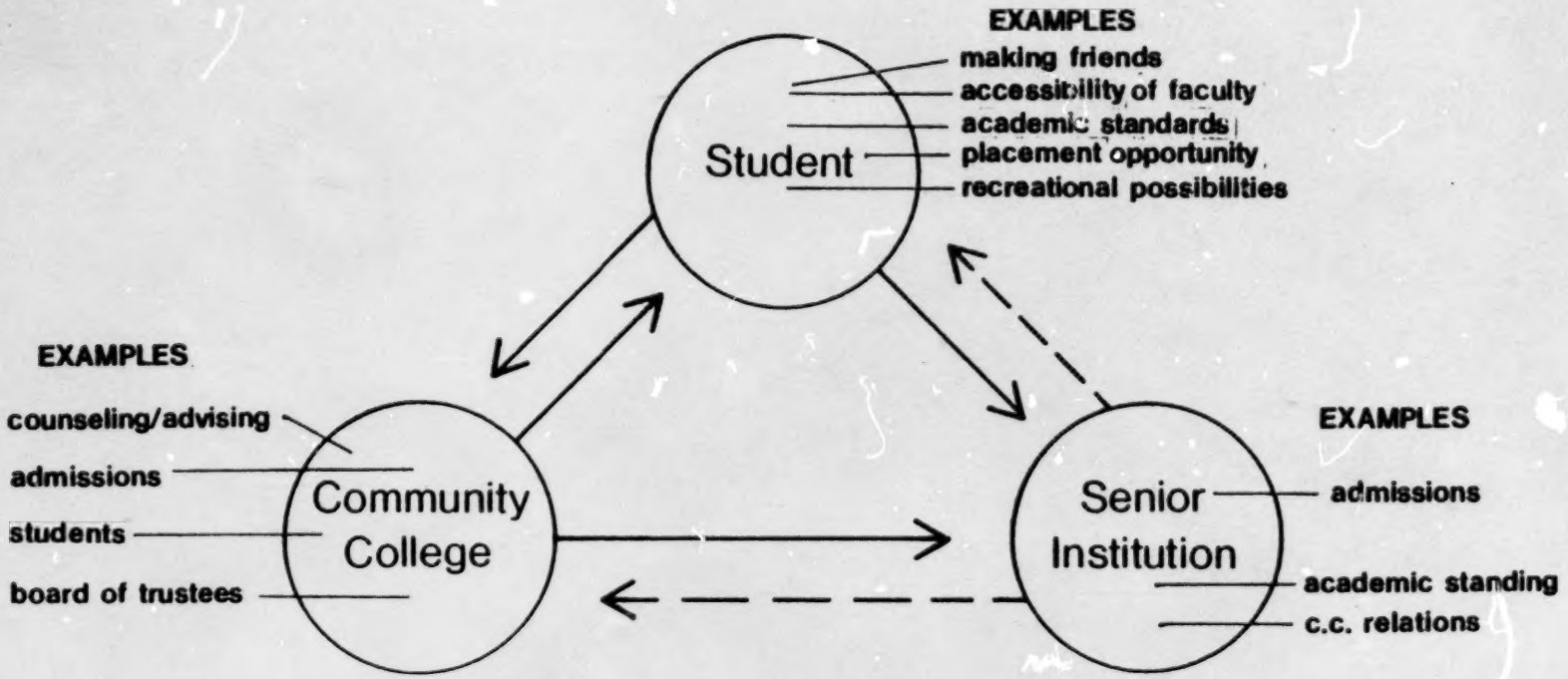
You may wonder how so much was gotten onto a standard size sheet. Our simple process patterned after the procedure used at Moraine Valley Community College and Delta College begins with a large sheet of IBM paper on which the survey is typed in two columns. Then the survey is reduced to the standard (8½ x 11 inch) size on a copier. Our minor innovation prints it on NCR (National Cash Register) two-ply sheets. NCR paper produces a copy of the responses on the second sheet (which contains a duplicate of the questions). Respondents are asked to retain the second sheet. Use of NCR two-ply for short surveys is something we at OCC have found useful.

IV. Promoting the Transfer Program Outcomes

The model devised for TPO illustrates the relationships of the community college and senior institution with the student. Chart 3 depicts the model. We now look at promoting TPO at home (OCC) and the senior institutions. The chart of the model should clarify the process.

CHART 3

TPO Model With Student Focus*



— — — responsibility of senior institution to use input of its students to evaluate sending institutions. Premature at this time.

——— responsibility of sending institutions involved in TPO

* model can be rotated

1. At Home

Response to our pilot study was encouraging. We provided copies of both preliminary and detailed results to the SDF member who was impressed both with the speed of feedback and the amount of information generated. She valued the opportunity to check the quality of information she had been giving to potential transfers about her senior institution with what enrolled OCC transfers found there. We cautioned her about selection bias. She still wanted the cover letter, survey and student feedback, and detailed results given to another SDF member. We did this and inquired whether such information from her senior institution would be of value. When she agreed it would, we requested her local address mailing labels and her signature on an appropriate cover letter. (Note: different cover letters need to be written for each cohort.) IRE took care of the rest. In this instance, the SDF member was not going to attend the transfer articulation conference and student inputs would not have been registered without the TPO. However, feedback was provided to subjects within 3 weeks of the original mailing. A second set of preliminary and detailed reports was written.

In the "this is the house that Jack built" tradition just described, both reports and all supporting materials were provided to still another SDF member to whom it was suggested that surveying transfer students at each senior institution every few years might be productive.

2. at the Senior Institution

Upon completion of the pilot study, copies of all materials were sent to the senior institution office which coordinates community college relations. Copies of all materials--from the first and second senior institution cohorts--were sent to the second senior institution upon completion. However, copies of these materials were sent to the third senior institution before its students were surveyed. In this instance, OCC's SDF member initiated the contact and the senior institution contacted IRE and agreed to cooperate in the study and furnish local mailing address labels for currently enrolled transfers from OCC. The fourth institution agreed to participate in TPO during a telephone conversation focused upon another follow-up matter. A fifth senior institution was impressed with another of our reports and offered assistance in performance of similar studies; we took them up on their offer.

This technique of soliciting cooperation by circulation of reports from other surveys of OCC students at the senior institutions (which relies upon demonstrating to each institution what the outcome of cooperation will be) works well.

3. the Total Plan

The current plan involves the eight senior institutions to which OCC sends

large numbers of transfers. Six are resident senior institutions. Two are commuter schools. Five schools have agreed to participate: four resident and one commuter. A comparison of full- and part-time students will be initiated at a later date after the original eight schools have been surveyed for base line purposes.

V. Specific Outcomes

The specific TPO results to date are so varied they require separate treatment. Accordingly, we summarize them under headings of feedback, data base, methods and analysis, dissemination strategy, and additional benefits.

1. Feedback

TPO has developed rapid feedback method for following up transfer students. Turnaround time to delivery of results is about four weeks. During that time students, community college, and senior institution personnel receive results.

Student reaction to the feedback (sending back their surveys, for instance) pleased us. We noticed--perhaps this is more important--that students also presented us with feedback. Students responded to the personalized service and used it to make requests of OCC (thereby sacrificing anonymity). Students seemed to need this link with the community college. Such a link, we hypothesize, may minimize transfer shock for new transfer students. We have not yet formally tested this proposition, however, the majority of those identifying themselves by name were first term transfers.

Response rates to the first mailing were relatively high (averaging 40% at the institutions surveyed so far) verifying that the instrument and cover letter hit the correct tone. We are not talking about huge numbers: cohort size to date has averaged 50 OCC transfers.

Feedback to OCC via TPO has another important facet. The effects upon potential transfers of receiving TPO generated information include what happens to the 'undecided' student. Such students may be focused to a specific institution by possessing information from peers. The information provided may make all the difference in the world as to whether a student actually continues going to school. For students who are leaning toward a given senior institution, or who cannot decide between two senior institutions exerting equal strength pulls in different directions, the peer information may be the deciding factor. Naturally, it must be kept in mind that the ratings produced by TPO are not competitive but may influence the student's basic decisions of whether or not to transfer, and of where to transfer.

Within the community college the TPO results provide a different kind of feed-

back to administrators and to advisors. Results must be available for at least two purposes: planning, particularly planning relating to curriculum and instruction, and advising of potential transfer students. Two target groups of the internal dissemination plan (see section V. 4.) are SDF who provide information upon which students base their senior institution application decisions, and administrators and faculty who provide, or make plans and provisions for, the instructional aspects of the community college. These target groups are expected to utilize TPO in different ways, probably at different times during the academic year. Both user groups have a need for information consistent with the method reported by Stufflebeam (1971).

The planners will ultimately find a summary document (see section V. 3.) more useful for their purposes than the reports from individual senior institution cohorts. Summary documents can be used for purposes of projection and simulation design. They also can assist in administrative decision making. On the other hand, SDF will be more interested in having a series of individual reports about the senior institutions available when an individual student poses a specific question about where to transfer, when a colleague wished comparative information about the senior institutions which SDF members coordinate, or even when a student wants to match academic and social needs and achievements with those of a senior institution's strengths.

Results must also be made available to the senior institution. We hypothesize that such materials as we have begun to gather and provide would be useful to the senior institutions in explaining "where the students are coming from," that is, in making student expectations explicit. This information can also be used when assessing student progress. We hypothesize that the materials will aid in increasing accuracy of predictions of transfer students' success, over time as the data accumulate. Distinct advantages could accrue to admissions at the senior institution as a result. We foresee greater and more cordial relationships between the senior institutions and the community colleges as a result of performing these studies and of providing feedback.

Perhaps the senior institutions might also begin to collect perceptions of themselves as seen by transfer cohorts sent them from the community colleges. As has been shown (See Chart 3), we have left space for such a development in our model. After all, postsecondary institutions share a common goal--that of educating students--a common need regarding accountability to their publics and assessment of their own performance.

2. Data Base

TPO has begun to create a data base which should grow in utility over time.

Currently it furnishes baseline data. Information in the data base answers questions about transfer articulation: preliminary results indicate that OCC's information was highly accurate. Demographic information included makes possible identification of student attitudes about anonymity. These may appear serendipitous: recent transfers sacrifice anonymity in favor of continued ties with OCC; seasoned transfers maintain anonymity.

Perceptions of OCC are tentatively assessed as being measures of an underlying OCC rating. Similar views of OCC result, while cohorts rate their senior institutions rather differently. Comprehensive checks of counter assumptions are planned for later stages of data base analysis.

Composite pictures of each senior institution should emerge as the study continues and the data base grows. Composite pictures of OCC will also emerge as a function of the comparisons made by each cohort group on each variable chosen for inclusion in TPO. Resulting pictures should document changes within both institutions and students and should provide subtle, but helpful cues to OCC. The data base information ought to have prime utility to OCC's decision makers.

3. Methods of Analysis

In the current studies, TPO responses were analyzed by averaging for each item. For preliminary student feedback, data furnished was numbers of respondents in each category. (See Appendix A, Preliminary Tally of Responses.) This method was considered adequate for the purpose and was thought to minimize creation of bias in late responders. For the report to institutional personnel, opinion items and generalized ratings were assigned numerical values where necessary (values assigned corresponded to subject's words: 'average' = 3; 'excellent' = 5). Numerical values were averaged. Simple discrepancy measures were calculated for 'OCC' and 'This School' on each item across respondents. Each institution ('OCC' and 'This School') received a separate rating on each item; the ratings were compared. In addition, the number of students rating both schools as equal was provided. As an accuracy check overall ratings of each school were requested. The approach outlined yielded useful and interesting information.

Students liked OCC and thought well of their experience there whether it was a question of faculty-student interaction, advisement, or academic standards. Students gave evidence of good feelings about their senior institutions. Their responses mark them as a well-rounded, well adjusted group, which will be credit to their community when they return--as most will--from their senior institution.

In the comparative analyses mentioned (for instance, "what you thought before you came to this school about academic standards" and "what you think now about

academic standards") the work of other researchers was used as a jumping off point. Among them were Baird (1974) whom we have mentioned as encouraging both comparative analyses and the use of student informants, and Astin (1971) who states that "the impact of any educational practice or program can be assessed only by comparison with some alternative practice or program" (page 742). Combining aspects of these approaches should enable OCC to make substantial headway in advising students about senior institutions where they are likely to be successful, satisfied students based upon the reported experiences of a group of their peers: students who have similar interests and who have transferred from OCC to the senior institutions under consideration. It has often been said that people learn best from their peers, and that people can profit from the experience of others. We hope to give OCC students both of these advantages, and to present results of our methods of analysis in a form useful to students and advisers for transfer decision making purposes. Results of this aspect of the process will be carefully monitored. At present our approach is a rough screen, but it is a start.

More sophisticated analyses are projected across schools on the various aspects of student activity included in the TPO form. Analysis of a complete set of responses on, for instance "ease of making friends" could equip us with a baseline rating against which to project ratings given by cohorts at the various schools. We could then inform students that if they found the variable important and rated OCC the same way as a cohort at a given senior institution, they might investigate that institution on other important variables. Internal ratings could also be gathered from current OCC students, faculty, and staff on ease of making friends. Do we inside OCC perceive it as those who have been here and have moved on do? Are we overrating, or underrating OCC's friendliness? Chart 4 outlines one such analysis of selected institutional characteristics by cohorts across schools.

We can project ideal ratings on "academic standards" and test methods for achieving them. We can simulate ideal ratings and see which cohorts most closely approximate them. We can determine which variables contribute most to the ratings of the various cohorts and thus differentiate those who would fit in best at various senior institutions.

Multivariate analyses can be performed utilizing the demographic information along with the comparative ratings and perceptions. There are endless variations possible in the realm of analysis of TPO. We have touched here upon Alfred's (1977) concern with impact studies for long range planning and have suggested a few applications which open up with TPO. One important study planned for the near future examines the similarities and differences between commuter and resident

Chart 4

OCC Transfer Cohort Ratings of
OCC After Transfer to Public Senior Institution in Illinois

SENIOR INSTITUTIONS

Selected Institutional Characteristics	RESIDENTIAL								COMMUTER				TOTALS		
	W.I.U.		I.S.U.		N.I.U.		S.I.U.		E.I.U.		U. of I. U-C		U. of I. C-C		U.N.I.		Resident	Commuter	
	$\bar{X}$	N[1]	$\bar{X}$	N	$\bar{X}$	N	$\bar{X}$	N	$\bar{X}$	N	$\bar{X}$	N	$\bar{X}$	N	$\bar{X}$	N	$\bar{X}$ N	$\bar{X}$ N	$\bar{X}$ N
Assessibility of Faculty																			
Preparation of Faculty																			
Academic Advising																			
Help With Personal Problems																			
Academic Standards																			
Help With Vocational Planning																			
Making Friends																			
Overall Rating																			

1. Number of respondents
2. Where 1 = lowest, 3 = average, 5 = highest

students which TPO is able to reveal. Both groups are integral parts of the OCC scene and need to be represented.

Finally, replications at the senior institutions should answer the question of selection bias which troubled us in the pilot and subsequent study. We need to know whether we are receiving atypical responses from a skewed group, or whether our responses from a given senior institution really mirror what former OCC students find at that institution. It is too early to evaluate ourselves on this point.

4. Dissemination Strategy

In developing the dissemination strategy, attention was paid to the diverse needs of potential information users. Attention was also paid to the unique position which IRE is in to gather and disseminate sensitive information, and some of the information collected is sensitive. If an endeavor is to be successful, IRE must be above suspicion, perceived by all information recipients as objective. We feel that our dissemination strategy meets these requirements.

Respondents' confidentiality is preserved by anonymous responses to the survey. However, as a courtesy to respondents, and taking quite literally the guidelines for researchers recommended to members of AERA in connection with the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act, IRE provides all members of transfer cohorts surveyed with feedback. This meets the stricture of "not wasting students' time". It has other positive results outlined elsewhere in this paper.

To reiterate, our approach invites respondents to retain a copy of their responses. This gives us the options of either providing individual feedback via the mails, as we have done, or of publicizing preliminary results in the senior institution's student newspaper--a method which saves the community college both clerical time and postage--or both. People are sensitive about institutions, and the public presentation of results must be carefully monitored so that no erroneous information or impressions are presented. But sometimes either the community college or the senior institution may be viewed as less than ideal by the responding cohort. We feel that in an era of openness, the public presentation of results is worth a try.

The student newspaper presentation of results does additional things: it creates P.R. for the community college, stronger cohort feeling for its transfers, and perhaps more important, it creates awareness for the community college. Last but not least, materials published in the senior institutions's newspaper have a way of appearing within a week or so in the community's newspaper, thus reversing the old saying about "A prophet is without honor in his own land". The senior institution receives collateral publicity through this kind of dissemination: each

article featuring the OCC transfer cohort mentions the name of the senior institution. Obviously, the senior institution is at an advantage in openness with regard to results. Senior institutions are viewed as more glamourous, more prestigous. But are they always more effective? The public will continue to think so in the absence of considerable documentation demonstrating equal effectiveness, or superior effectiveness.

In summary, our dissemination strategy provides rapid feedback in a usable form to current OCC students, to their advisers, to administrators, to senior institution personnel, and naturally to IRE for further research. Publication in the media will provide information to the communities of both institutions as well.

5. Additional Benefits

As Astin (1971) comments, evaluation can assist in "instructional process and in the administration of the educational program" (page 747) but cautions us not to overuse output information. "While output information is not, by itself, a sufficient basis for evaluating the impact of a given program, the availability of such information does make it possible to determine whether desired changes have taken place...and whether certain absolute standards of performance are being met" (page 748).

Community colleges have a delegated responsibility to provide this kind of information, but procedures have been lacking. TPO begins to fill this gap. The data analyses reported have purposely been kept simple to encourage other community colleges to take TPO and modify it to meet their particular needs. It is our thinking that simple analyses where there have been none before are infinitely preferable to continuing without information.

Collecting the information suggested, and using it, is efficient. The methods, materials, results can be used to fulfill reporting requirements to various agencies of federal and state governments. The documentation is impressive when the fateful time of accreditation comes along and the institution must justify past performances and indicate future plans along with present activities.

Among other outcomes which might be overlooked are the gradual growth of institutional affiliation. The idea will grow among transfers who are asked to provide the community college with information about their senior institution, that the community colleges don't neglect their graduates, former students, and transfers. It will become apparent to them that these former students are still part of the community with relatives, neighbors, and roots there. Such persons will give the community college the work of mouth reputation so important for a community institution--our community college is a community based, caring institution.

If a researcher feels this outcome is desirable, then perhaps the transfers to the

senior institution need to be surveyed every two years to assure that information is sought from the majority of them.

Information gathered has yet another value for the community college. It is useful in pinpointing potential problems so that midcourse corrections can be made. For example if all OCC transfers to senior institutions during a given year report that they believe much less study time will be needed at the senior institution than turns out to be the case, different information can be given, or academic preparation can be made more rigorous, or both. Such information has utility in planning as well as in academic and vocational counseling. It certainly could be a helpful input to decision making at the community college.

The senior institutions reap another collateral benefit from TPO. This is the recruitment advantage arising from the increased cooperation with the community college. Going back to the "house that Jack built" approach mentioned earlier, the respect for the community college which TPO has generated for OCC is bound to be reciprocated. But both institutions, the community college, and the senior, will produce smoother transitions for students and more 'successes' (graduates). They will both then aid in greater fulfillment of state requirements. These are outcomes to encourage.

VI. Obstacles

The obverse of outcomes is obstacles. The major obstacles include one kind of input bias which we have experienced, namely timing of the survey, and one which might occur, namely lack of cooperation from the senior institution.

Timing is a sensitive feature of TPO and involves both the point of the semester at which information is requested from students enrolled in the senior institution, and the delay between first mailing and student receipt of preliminary feedback. Timing has a marked effect on response rate. Among our early studies one was done in the fall and one in the spring. The spring study turned out much better. Maybe what we were measuring was really a weather artifact. Interestingly, OCC came out about the same in both studies on the 'overall' measure. We cannot tell what to attribute that to. Timing can be affected by our superior mail system (second only to that of Mexico). To minimize the possibility of fatal delays, we suggest first class mail for sending out the surveys and feedback; the stamped self-addressed return envelopes can be at a more advantageous rate.

Lack of cooperation from a senior institution could be as simple as a failure to provide campus address mailing labels for the currently enrolled OCC transfer students. While this lack of cooperation would not preclude performance of the resident student follow-up, it would make matters more cumbersome and time consuming:

one could always send surveys to students' home addresses (as one would do for the commuter students), using a different time schedule, one geared to a vacation week when students would be likely to be at home.

The obstacles, thus, are not insurmountable. In fact, they are minor.

VII. Suggested Improvements

One improvement would be the inclusion of a variable suggested by Kintzer (1975). We completely overlooked the importance of size of the senior institution, and the state schools in Illinois vary considerably, although none is really small. This variable should be added to forms generated by further research efforts.

Use of optical scan materials which could be directly computer analyzed would obviate much of the tabulation currently done by hand and would have data so prepared that more complex analyses would present no problems. This improvement would be particularly welcome where the transfer cohort numbers more than 100 students, as it usually does at the larger senior institutions to which OCC sends transfers.

The already mentioned inclusion of the commuter schools which for community colleges tend to attract the largest cohorts is another improvement. Since this paper was begun, one of OCC's commuter schools has agreed to cooperate in the TPO. Both commuter and resident cohorts need to be analyzed for both full- and part-time students which we suspect form distinct groups capable of yielding useful but different information to their OCC peers among others.

A final improvement would be the production of brochures graphically illustrating the results of TPO, and updated as new information is collected. A comparative study really should provide easy to use comparative information to users. We are working on this.

VIII. Summary

This paper has described development of a system for assessing transfer program outcomes. While originally designed to provide timely information about senior institutions as experienced by cohorts of transfer students, TPO appears to do considerably more. Development of the system highlights desired outcomes including those of more accurate advising of potential transfer students, and utility of results for planning, accountability, and monitoring of transfer students to public senior institutions. The pilot study is detailed as is development of the instrument, a variant of the usual survey format. A section is devoted to promotion of TPO at the community college as well as at the senior institution. A projection is made of public sector TPO scope within the state and major variables are discussed.

Current progress on the TPO is reported.

Specific outcomes related to feedback, data base, methods and analyses, dissemination strategy are treated. Additional benefits such as data for other reporting requirements, growth of institutional affiliation, and ability to pinpoint potential problems are cited for the community college. The senior institutions receive recruitment advantages and other benefits accruing from inter-institutional cooperation.

Obstacles included one relating to timing of TPO data collection; a possible obstacle would be lack of cooperation by the senior institution. Improvements suggested are mainly procedural: use of optical scan materials, inclusion of senior institution size, and part-/full-time student status as variables. Future plans for comprehensive data analysis, as well as for composite pictures of the community colleges are outlined.

The TPO has been illustrated by using one community college--Oakton Community College--as a case study. Students, OCC, and the senior institutions are enthusiastic about TPO. Community college researchers are encouraged to institute similar assessment programs.

EBK/sas
7/6/78

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Appendix A Exhibit 1

Oakton Community College
7900 North Nagle
Morton Grove, Illinois 60053
312 / 967 5120

February 1, 1978

Dear Former Oakton Student,

We need your help. In fact, we need your help so much that we are going to travel all the way from Morton Grove to Macomb to get it. We would like to get together with you in the Univeristy Union on

Wednesday, February 8 between 1 and 3 PM
or
Thursday, February 9 between 9:30 and 11 AM

in the rooms scheduled for the Community College representatives. Look for us at the table with an Oakton sign.

Why are you so important to us? Because you are one of a select group--Oakton students who transferred to W.I.U.--who can help us improve the information we give to current OCC students who plan to join you at W.I.U. No other students have this important information.

In addition to that, we'd like to meet you and find out how you are doing and to help you in any way we can.

We are enclosing a short, anonymous questionnaire for you to fill out. Stick one copy in the return envelope and mail it to us. Bring the other copy with you. If we get enough questionnaires mailed back to us on time, we will be able to discuss the results when we see you. The copy you keep will be fun to compare with the final results of the entire group. So thanks in advance for taking a few minutes from your busy schedule to help us out.

Again, we are looking forward to seeing you on February 8th or 9th.

Sincerely,
Jane Alt

Jane Alt
Student Development Faculty

Emily B. Kirby

Emily B. Kirby, Ph. D.
Director of Instructional
Research and Evaluation

EBK/sas
1/31/78

Appendix A Exhibit 2

Oakton Community College
7900 North Nagle
Morton Grove, Illinois 60053
312 / 967 5120

February 28, 1978

Dear Oakton Transfer to W.I.U.,

Here is a preliminary summary of the responses to our Transfers' Evaluation of Oakton Community College Experience. It would be a lot more accurate if more of you had responded.

If you filled in and sent us the white copy, you might want to get out your yellow copy to compare your answers. If you did not send back your response, please do it now. Use the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. Your responses are important. We do need them!

We would like to thank again all those who took a few moments to fill out the questionnaire.

Good Luck! Have a great rest of the year.

Sincerely,

Jane Alt

Jane Alt
Student Development Faculty

Emily B. Kirby

Emily B. Kirby, Ph. D.
Director of Instructional
Research and Evaluation

EBK/sas
2/28/78

Appendix A Exhibit 3

Preliminary Tally of Responses
(Spring, 1978): O.C.C. Transfers to I.S.U.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

AUG 25 1978

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGES

Number of questionnaires sent: 51
Number of questionnaires returned: 20
Range of semesters at I.S.U.: 1-6
Average number of semesters at I.S.U.: 2.0
Range of class status: Freshman - Senior
Median class status: Sophomore
Modal class status: Sophomore
Age range: 19 - 22 years
Number of each sex responding: M = 9; F = 11
Range of semesters at O.C.C.: 1 - 4
60% of students had transferred after 2 semesters
100% of students had transferred after 4 semesters
16 students received I.S.U. credit for all O.C.C. courses
19 students are taking 12 or more credits Spring semester
18 students are taking 15 or more credits: 8 are taking 8 - 14 credits
6 students found I.S.U. more expensive than they expected
5 students expect it to take longer than 2 years to graduate
2 students find I.S.U. harder than they expected
10 students find I.S.U. as difficult as they expected
4 students find I.S.U. recreational possibilities worse than they expected
4 students find I.S.U. recreational possibilities as expected
8 students find they need to study more than expected
4 students find they need to study less than expected
6 students find they need to study as much as they expected

Student Perceptions of:	School with higher rating	Number of students rating both schools as equal
1. Accessibility of Faculty	O.C.C. slightly higher	9
2. Preparation of Faculty	I.S.U.	7
3. Academic advising	I.S.U. somewhat higher	3
4. Help with personal problems	Equal	11
5. Academic standards	I.S.U. much higher	6
6. Help with vocational plans	Equal	12
7. Ease of making friends	I.S.U. much higher	6
8. Part-time placement	Equal	6
9. Overall rating	I.S.U. much higher	7

Prepared by I.R.E. 4/28/78

Appendix A Exhibit 4 ISU 9

Oakton Community College

Transfers' Evaluation of Oakton Community College Experience

1978

1. We need to know about you. Please fill in the information requested below. Where possible circle the right answer.

   a. Sex: (M) F
   b. Semesters at THIS school: 1 (2) 3 4 5 6 7 8
   c. Class status at THIS school: Fr So Jr (Sr)
      other (please explain) _____
   d. Age: (in years) 21
   e. Semesters at Oakton Community College: 1 2 3 (4) 5 6 7 8
   f. Number of Oakton Community College credits earned: 62
   g. Number of Oakton Community College credits transferred: 62
   h. Your major at THIS school: Business Administration
   i. Number of credits you are taking this semester: 15

2. We need to know your opinion. Please give us your estimate (a) before coming to THIS school, and (b) now about THIS school. You will need to give two (2) answers for each topic.

Estimates of	(a) what you thought before you came to THIS school	(b) what you think now about THIS school
a. Costs	$3,000 per year	$2,000 per year
b. Number of semesters to graduation	2 semesters	2 semesters
c. Academic standards	high	not as high
d. Recreational possibilities	Many	not enough
e. Study time needed	alot	alot

3. Rating of Oakton Community College and this school. Below we have listed some important features of college life. We would like you to rate THIS school on each of them. Then we would like you to rate Oakton Community College on the same features of college life. First, do the column marked This School, then do the column marked Oakton Community College. Use the scale below:

   1=lowest 2=fairly low 3=average 4=above average 5=highest

   Remember to rate each feature twice.

	This School	Oakton Community College
a. Accessibility of Faculty	3	5
b. Preparation of Faculty	4	4
c. Academic advising	1	3
d. Help with personal problems	1	3
e. Academic standards	4	3
f. Help with vocational planning	2	3
g. Making friends	5	2
h. Part-time placement opportunity	2	2
i. Overall rating of each school	3	3

4. Courses transferred. Here we are asking you to name any Oakton Community College courses that did NOT transfer to THIS school. Where you can, please give us the reason why THIS school did not credit a course. Do not list any that YOU failed. Please follow instructions carefully.

   a. Course number and title
   b. Reason given for non-transfer

1a. None

1b.

2a.

2b.

3a.

3b.

4a.

4b.

Is there something especially good about either school that you think we ought to know? Or something especially bad? Have we missed anything? Help us by listing it below, continue on the back if necessary.

At ISU the facilities are lacking. ALSO, parking is lousy + classes are hard to get.

Thank you for your time and your help.
Student Development Faculty and Instructional Research and Evaluation

Prepared by I.R.E. 2/1/78 EBK/sas